

# Dowdell (2011) Research

- About two-thirds of Internet sexual offenders bring up the topic of sex during the first chat session with adolescents and young adults
- More than half of the Internet sexual offenders said they disguise their identity when online, and most said they prefer communicating with teen girls rather than boys.
- More than half of the high school girls (56.7%) in the study knew about sexting (sending sexually explicit messages or photos electronically), compared with 46.9% of boys. Private school students were more likely to know about sexting than public school students -- 75% versus 50%.

# Dowdell (2011) con't

- Of the 59 middle school students who said they chatted with strangers online, 32 of them said they had met the stranger in person, and three of these said they were sexually assaulted or inappropriately touched.
- Of the 51 high school boys who said they had a face-to-face meeting with a stranger they met online, 33 said "something sexual" (consensual) happened, and 10 reported being threatened or sexually assaulted.
- Of the 58 high school girls who said they met in person with a stranger they met online, 21 said something sexual happened and seven said they were threatened or sexually assaulted.

# Elliott, Beech, Mandeville-Norden, & Hayes (2009) Research

- N = 505 Internet Offenders      N = 526 Contact Offenders
- Internet offense type:
  - significantly higher identification with fictional characters than contact offenders
  - Increase in scores on scales of fantasy, underassertiveness, and motor impulsivity were predictive
- Contact Offense Type:
  - significantly more victim empathy distortions and cognitive distortions than Internet offenders
  - An increase in scores of scales of locus of control, perspective taking, empathic concern, overassertiveness, victim empathy distortions, cognitive distortions, and cognitive impulsivity were found to be predictive

# Elliott, Beech, & Mandeville- Norden (2012) Research

- N = 526 contact offenders
- N = 459 internet offenders
- N = 143 mixed contact/internet offenders
- contact group demonstrated
  - lower victim empathy
  - a greater level of pro-offending attitudes
  - an externalized locus of control
  - more assertiveness
  - a diminished ability to relate to fictional characters
  - greater impulsivity than the internet and mixed offender groups

# Elliott, Beech, & Mandeville- Norden (2012) con't

- The mixed offender group :
  - demonstrated a higher level of empathic concern than the other two groups
  - distinguished from the internet group by increased personal distress and perspective-taking ability
  - mixed offender profile that was similar to internet offenders rather than contact offenders
- key linear factor distinguishing between the groups
  - offense-supportive attitudes and identification with fictional characters
  - higher levels of empathic concern and poor self-management

# Bates & Metcalf (2007) Research

- 39 men convicted of internet sex offences
- 39 convicted of contact offences against a specific victim
- internet group:
  - higher rates of socially desirable responding
  - higher rates of emotional loneliness and under assertiveness
  - (although the latter two findings were not statistically significant)
  - lower scores on
    - external locus of control,
      - which might reflect their generally higher levels of education and employment
    - sexualized attitudes towards children
    - emotional congruence with children
    - empathy distortions with regard to victims of child abuse
  - exhibited the kinds of general personality problems exhibited by other sex offenders
  - did not support attitudes that explicitly endorse or condone the sexual abuse of children

## Bourke & Hernandez (2009) Research

- Internet offenders were significantly more likely than not to have sexually abused a child via a hands-on act.
- Offenders who abused children were likely to have offended against multiple victims, and that the incidence of “crossover” by gender and age is high.

# Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor (2005)

## Research

- Research: Police Posing as Juveniles Online to Catch Sex Offenders: Is It Working?
  - Results show proactive investigations represented a significant proportion (25%) of all arrests for Internet sex crimes against minors.
  - Such investigations were being conducted at all levels of law enforcement.
  - The online personas assumed by investigators paralleled the ages and genders of real youth victimized in sex crimes that started as online encounters.
  - These proactive investigations accessed an offender group that appeared somewhat less deviant in terms of adult sexual behavior and arrest history but equally deviant as other online offenders in terms of possession of child pornography.

# Mitchell, Wolak, & Finkelhor (2005) con't

- Prosecution of these cases produced high rates of guilty pleas and low rates of dismissed or dropped cases.
- The entrapment, fantasy or role-playing, and factual impossibility defenses were used but not successfully.
- Findings suggest that the Internet sometimes allows law enforcement to interdict before a youth is victimized, gather solid evidence of offenses, and find and track some offenders.

## Wortley & Smallbone (2006) Research

- Internet child pornography users are more than likely:
  - to be in a relationship
  - to be employed
  - to have an above average IQ
  - to be college educated
  - not have a criminal record

## Wortley & Smallbone (2006) con't

- Examples of arrested online child pornography users have included:
  - judges
  - dentists
  - teachers
  - academics
  - rock stars
  - soldiers
  - police officers

## Wortley & Smallbone (2006) con't

- Research shows they are likely to be:
  - white
  - male
  - between the ages of 26 and 40
  - may be heavy Internet users to the extent that it interferes with other aspects of their lives

# Seto (2009)

- It was found that 8.5% of the 201 adult male child pornography offenders in the registry study and 4% of the sample of 301 adult male child pornography offenders in the police case file study *were criminally charged for a new sexual offense involving physical contact with a victim during follow-up (5.9 and 3.9 years respectively)*
- The prevalence of a contact sexual offense history ranges from a low of 8% to 44%
- Many child pornography offenders who had no known history of contact sexual offenses subsequently admitted to such crimes after participating in treatment and, in some cases, undergoing polygraph examinations

# Seto (2009) con't

- Child pornography offenders:
  - more likely to show a pedophilic sexual arousal pattern by responding more to depictions of children than to depictions of adults
  - more intelligent and better educated as well, likely reflecting the fact that their crimes involved the use of computers and Internet technologies
  - on average, lower risk for contact sexual offending than already identified contact sex offenders
  - demonstrate a less extensive criminal history, scored lower in psychopathy
  - scored lower on the risk scales

# Hands on concurrent

- Hands on predictive risk
- Issues with regard to assessing risk by utilizing criminal justice data, like arrest, charges and convictions
- Contact offenses related to net offenses: both historic and predictive
  - Shaw et al.
  - Garby, Gray & Bartosh
- Ceci and Brook Study
  - only 30% of children ever report being sexually abused, so the arrest data grossly under represents the actual prediction

# **Criminal Justice System Response**

# Response to Net Crimes

- How does the Criminal Justice respond to the crimes relate to supervision and treatment?
  - Risk Assessments
  - Psychosexual Evaluations can assist prosecutors in determining
    - Trial versus no trial
    - Plea bargain
  - What type of plea bargain: county jail versus no county jail
  - Plea bargain: sex offender terms versus no sex offender terms
  - Treatment needs, in other words, specified sex offender treatment programs.
- Supervision styles: IPS versus standard

# Response to Net Crimes con't

- Risk assessment methodology
- What should the risk assessment include?
  - Static 99R (may not be applicable in all cases)
  - HCR 20
- **POLYGRAPHS**
  - The problem with finding quality polygraph examiners and what to do about it
- MMPI versus MCMI versus PAI
  - Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory -II
  - Millon Clinical Multiaxial Inventory-III
  - Personality Assessment Inventory
- Multi-Phasic Sex Inventory II (MSI-II)
  - What do you get out of that test?
- Abel Assessment
  - How to assess the Abel in terms of its quality

# Response to Net Crimes con't

- There is value in examining the sexual offense histories of child pornography offenders because those with a known history of contact sexual offending can be assessed using established actuarial risk measures (Seto, 2007)
- See ATSA requirements for psychosexual evaluations

# Case Studies

# Closing

- Not all Internet Offenders are the same
- Motivation for the crime must be considered when assessing risk to the community
- A lot of Internet Offender research regarding hands on based on criminal justice and from Canada where polygraphy is NOT used, so it is based on self-report

# Questions?

- Thank you for the opportunity to present.
- If you have unanswered questions today please feel free to contact Dr. Garby and Dr. Gray at Psychological & Consulting Services at 480.777.8807 or visit us on the web at:  
[www.Pcs-forensic.com](http://www.Pcs-forensic.com)